

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



This Is My Father's World

The recent tariff wars initiated by US President Donald Trump have caused significant anxiety and burden across many nations. People around the world now face uncertainties and challenges, especially as rising prices threaten their livelihoods. As I reflected on this global situation, a verse from the Gospel of Matthew came to mind:

Matthew 22:21 “...Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

In this passage, the Pharisees and the Herodians, who were usually opposed to each other, joined forces to trap Jesus. They asked, “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” (v.17). It was a cunning setup – if Jesus said “yes”, he would lose favour with the Jews who despised Roman taxes; if he said “no”, they could accuse him of rebellion against Rome.

But Jesus, with divine wisdom, asked them to show him a denarius, which is a Roman coin, and inquired, “Whose image is this?” They replied, “Caesar’s.” Then he said, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

With that response, Jesus affirmed the role of earthly authority. Paul later also wrote in **Romans 13:1: “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”** As responsible citizens, we are to honour the laws of the land and fulfil our duties, such as paying taxes and respecting authority. For most of us, that part is relatively straightforward.

But the more important and challenging question for us as Christians is this: ***Do we also render to God what belongs to God?***

What exactly belongs to God? The answer is found in the offertory prayer often recited during church service: **“Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour, and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours. All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.”** God owns everything – not only our finances but also our time, our talents, our bodies, and the list goes on. While we may be diligent in fulfilling our civic duties, are we equally careful to offer to God what is rightly His? Given that God owns everything, we are His stewards. A steward is entrusted with managing something that does not belong to them.

So, while we may give the state what it requires, we must give our whole selves, our lives, our loyalty, as worship to God. Caesar can have the coin, but only God can claim the soul. Just as the coin bears Caesar’s image, we bear God’s image (Genesis 1:27). Yes, we live in this world and are impacted by its systems. But we are called to be in the world, not of it. Our peace and purpose do not depend on whether policies benefit us financially but on whether we reflect God’s character in every situation.

One hymn that has always encouraged me in times like this is “This Is My Father’s World.” The last verse beautifully reminds us:

*This is my Father’s world. O let me ne’er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father’s world. The battle is not done;
Jesus who died shall be satisfied, and earth and Heav’n be one.*

May we not be distracted by the noise of the world, but in every crisis pause to ask: What is God saying to us through this?

May our eyes be fixed not on ‘Caesar’, but on Christ.

God bless you.

Pastor Kelvin